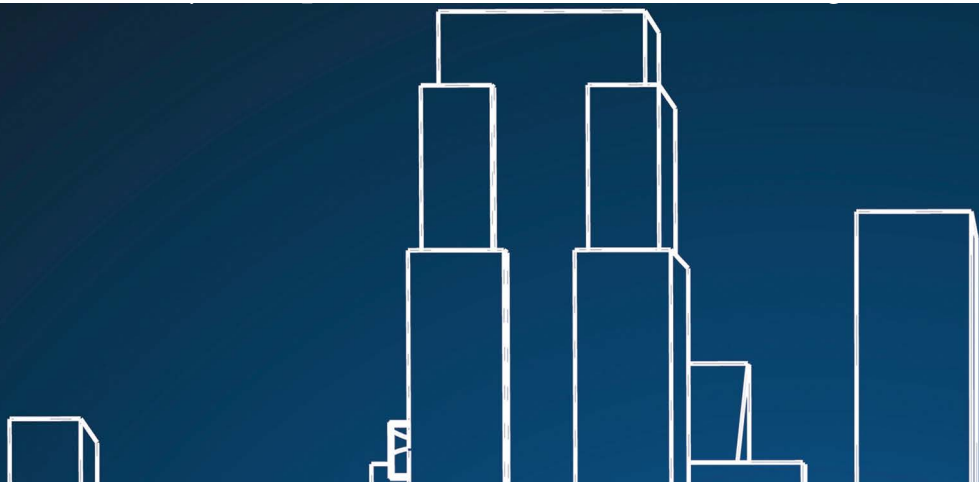


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EUROPEAN PORT CITIES AND URBAN REGENERATION

EXPLORING CULTURAL AND SPORTING MEGA EVENTS
AT THE WATER'S EDGE

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ROUTLEDGE

1 Introduction

Exploring port cities of culture and events

The 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona are widely considered to have been a game changer for the city (e.g. Jauhiainen, 1995; Marshall, 2004). The event was an integral part of an ambitious programme of urban regeneration and contributed to repositioning Barcelona as a global tourist destination. The ‘Manchester of the Mediterranean’, or the ‘Catalan Manchester’, with its industrial waterfront stretching between the rivers Besòs and Llobregat, is now a distant memory. The Olympic Games provided the political rationale, and the resources, to reconvert the historic inner harbour Port Vell and to develop Port Olímpic, a marina surrounded by the artificial sandy beaches and waterfront promenades that are now much appreciated by residents and tourists. Nevertheless, even if local imaginaries of the industrial port city have been replaced by those of a cosmopolitan, global metropolis by the sea, Barcelona is still one of the most important ports on the Mediterranean, albeit the ties among the city, its port and the sea have changed in the last decades. As in many other port cities across Europe, Barcelona’s commercial port moved to the outskirts of the city, while the local population gradually lost track of maritime practices, which became difficult to observe and appreciate.

Twenty-five years later, fireworks and spectacular light show displays opened the UK City of Culture in Kingston-upon-Hull, in Northern England, celebrating the city’s past as Britain’s third most important port in the early 20th century (see e.g. East, 1931). This parallel between a medium-sized port city hosting a national cultural festival and an Olympic host city such as Barcelona might sound excessively audacious. However, in both localities, policy makers made use of large-scale events in the attempt to generate momentum around economic and urban regeneration. The transformative force of these events acted on the ties between the port and the city. In relative, context-specific terms, one could argue that very different events in rather different contexts were being perceived as unique opportunities for achieving long-lasting change. For instance, Hull, as the city is broadly referred to, had long been stigmatised due to socio-economic decline resulting from the reduction of maritime activities, particularly fishing (Tommarchi & Bianchini, 2022). As it will be discussed in the next chapters, Hull UK City of Culture 2017 was then framed by local policy makers as a ‘once in a lifetime opportunity’ to

achieve economic regeneration in the city, which would be coupled with the development of its port as a renewable energy hub in the country.

The much-heralded case of Barcelona and the more recent experience of Hull set well the background to present the book and show how the idea of using large-scale cultural, sporting or commercial events (e.g. the Olympics, FIFA World Cup, expos and national and international cultural festivals such as the European Capital of Culture, see Chapter 2) to achieve regeneration has spread across cities of any scale. The book embarks on a journey across maritime port cities where these events have been celebrated as milestones within long-term processes of urban regeneration. The key aim of the book is to explore the mutual influence between port-city relationships and event-led regeneration in maritime port cities, which is arguably overlooked in both port city studies and the literature on culture and regeneration. The key argument is that, on the one hand, regeneration processes driven by large-scale events do impact – directly or contingently – on the spatial, political and symbolic ties between ports and cities, while on the other hand, the maritime nature of port cities contributes to shaping these transformation processes. The book presents detailed accounts of event-led regeneration in four European port cities that whilst sharing common experiences in this regard, nevertheless differ in population size, economy and national political settings: Hull (UK), Rotterdam (the Netherlands), Genoa (Italy) and Valencia (Spain). These accounts are enriched with examples from other port cities across the world where large-scale and mega events have been held, such as Cape Town, Rio de Janeiro and Shanghai. In this introduction, firstly, the rationale for and the purpose of the book are presented. Secondly, preliminary definitions of some of the key concepts used are provided. These concepts are discussed more in detail in Chapter 2. Thirdly, the key themes of the book that guide the discussion in Chapters 4–7 are listed. Finally, the structure of the book is outlined.

Why exploring port cities of culture and events

This monograph¹ examines how event-led regeneration (understood as a form of culture-led regeneration driven by large-scale cultural, sporting or commercial events, see Chapter 2) contributes to shaping contemporary port-city relationships – intended as the set of spatial, socio-economic, cultural-symbolic and political relationships between the port and the city – and to what extent local maritime cultures and port-city relationships influence these processes of regeneration. Mega events – as these events are broadly referred to in the book – are interpreted as pivotal moments along longer-term trajectories of urban regeneration driven by cultural activity (as in Evans, 2011). Therefore, albeit with a focus on these events, this volume examines mutual connections between event-led regeneration and port-city relationships on a longer timeframe.

The rationale for this work, with its specific focus on port cities, is threefold. Firstly, mega events often take place at the water's edge. Januchta-Szostak and Biedermann (2014, p. 72) calculated that, from the second half of the 19th to the beginning of the 21st century, areas in proximity to water have hosted

66.7% of world and international exhibitions, 100% of gardening exhibitions, 88.9% of Summer Olympics, 72.7% of Winter Olympics and 70.5% of European City/Capital of Culture schemes. Despite this clear pattern, event studies seldom engage with the mutual influence between event-led regeneration and the relationships between cities and water, let alone with aspects of maritime history and heritage in the case of port cities. Secondly, the rhetoric of culture-led regeneration praises the reconversion of former areas of production – in this case, former port areas in proximity to city centres – into areas of consumption. This has been achieved especially between the 1980s and early 2010s in many deindustrialising European port cities such as Antwerp, Barcelona, Genoa, Glasgow, Hamburg, Marseille, Newcastle and Rotterdam, where culture- or event-led regeneration (including regeneration processes related to unsuccessful event bids) has also operated as a symbolic process shaping the image of these cities (see e.g. Bailey et al., 2004; García, 2004; Richards & Wilson, 2004; Andres, 2011; Gastaldi, 2012). Nevertheless, academic and policy research has devoted little attention to how these processes shape and are shaped by local maritime cultures and the relationships between cities and ports. Thirdly, notwithstanding an increasing number of cities – and port cities in particular – pursuing event-led regeneration for economic and, more recently, social goals, evaluation studies and academic research appear to focus mostly on the short-term economic impacts of these processes. These studies tend to overlook the broader and longer-term socio-cultural and political outcomes of these processes and fail to unravel their backward, forward and parallel linkages with other policy areas or processes (as noted in the 1990s by Hiller, 1998). All this suggests the need for further research addressing the broader spatial, socio-economic, political and cultural impacts of event-led regeneration in port cities. In addition, the study of event-led regeneration offers new ways of looking at port-city relationships, which itself is an emerging research topic in urban studies, such as the blend of maritime and urban functions on the waterfront, the emergence of innovative forms of urban living at the water's edge, the symbolic aspects of these relationships and the role of maritime culture in the everyday lives of port city dwellers.

In this monograph, both event-led regeneration and port-city relationships are interpreted as dynamic processes, in continuous evolution, which contribute to physically shaping the urban fabric and symbolically framing the imaginaries of port cities. Therefore, the overarching question behind the book is: how do event-led regeneration and port-city relationships influence and interact with each other, particularly in terms of the socio-spatial, political and symbolic aspects of these relationships? The originality of the book lies both in its call to consider event-led regeneration as a factor in the evolution of port-city relationships and in its exploration of these processes in relation to the maritime character of cities. On the one hand, port-city relationships are explored through the lens of mega events, providing an innovative perspective on their geographical and symbolic dimensions. On the other hand, event-led regeneration is approached considering the specific issues arising from the spatial, socio-economic, political and cultural relationships between cities and ports.

The book differs from the available studies on urban regeneration and waterfront redevelopment for its focus is on the port-city interface as a geographical space, its connection with the evolution of port-city relationships and the links with broader societal and symbolic aspects. For these reasons and for its interpretation of large-scale cultural, sporting and commercial events as special moments along longer-term trajectories of urban development and regeneration, the book differs from most studies on mega events as well. By bringing together insights from urban studies, urban planning, human geography, marine and maritime sociology and anthropology, cultural policy and planning, the book situates itself within the emerging field of port city studies and offers a critical framework for interpreting event-led regeneration in the context of port-city relationships and to deliver policy recommendations that can help policy makers and event promoters in port cities.

Port cities, culture and regeneration: key concepts

The discussion in the following chapters makes use of a number of concepts, which are explored more in detail in Chapter 2, such as port-city relationships, waterfront redevelopment, port-city interface, culture- and event-led regeneration and mega events. The *port* remains a real, yet unidentified object, generally understood as a transportation node where land and water meet (Ducruet, 2007). In this volume, a definition of ‘port’ is not outlined. Rather, this work encourages to think more broadly about commercial and industrial ports. The port is in this case conceptualised by stretching its meaning from the assemblage of working industrial and commercial areas where maritime activities take place to a broader socio-spatial entity encompassing aspects of material culture related to ports and local maritime cultures. This helps detect similar assets across port cities – for example inner harbours, redeveloped docks and quays – that constitute ‘port cityscapes’ (as defined by Hein, 2011) and outline a porous, ‘ecotonal’ transition from the port to the city as socio-spatial entities.

Port-city relationships are commonly understood in the literature as the spatial and functional ties between ports (intended as transport and industrial infrastructures) and cities (Hoyle & Pinder, 1992; Wiegman & Louw, 2011; Daamen & Louw, 2016). Some of the port geography literature has also connected port-city spatial and functional ties with socio-cultural, symbolic links between ports and their cities. These contributions highlight for example the impact of the restructuring of ports and maritime practices on the lives of port city dwellers and on the imaginary, or the ‘myth’, of the port city (Van Hoooydonk, 2007; Kokot, 2008; Bianchini & Bloomfield, 2012; Mah, 2014; Kowalewski, 2018).

This volume elaborates in particular on the model of port-city relationships outlined by Hoyle (1988, 1989, 2000). The model (see Chapter 2) portrays how, in the second half of the 20th century, deindustrialisation and port restructuring have exacerbated the separation, in spatial and functional terms, between ports and cities. This process produced derelict former port areas in virtually every port city across Europe and North America and provided the rationale for widespread redevelopment schemes. As a result, by the end of

the 1980s, waterfront redevelopment became a global phenomenon (Breen & Rigby, 1996; Brownhill, 2013), despite its many controversial aspects (e.g. Jauhainen, 1995; Ward, 2011). The *port-city interface* (Hayuth, 1982) is conceptualised as the geographical liminal space between ports and cities, where port migration and waterfront redevelopment have produced the most visible outcomes and where current port-city conflicts unfold.

Many redevelopment schemes on waterfronts and in urban port areas have made use of cultural activity as the catalyst for regeneration. In the book, *culture-led regeneration* is understood, along with Evans and Shaw (2004, p. 5), as an approach to urban regeneration where ‘cultural activity is seen as the catalyst and engine of regeneration’ and where ‘[t]he activity is likely to have a high-public profile and frequently to be cited as the sign of regeneration’. The discourse of urban regeneration, intended as a process to improve an area’s ‘economic, physical, social and environmental condition’ (Roberts, 2017 [1999], p. 18), gained momentum in the 1980s, in particular under neoliberal conservative governments of the time, such as in the UK. In this period, cultural activity began to be part of urban regeneration schemes, as the focus of urban cultural policies shifted from social to economic and urban development goals (Bianchini, 1993, p. 2). Culture-led regeneration began to be understood as a means to counteract socio-economic decline and rising unemployment (Bianchini, 1993, p. 2; Miles, 2005, p. 893), in particular in industrial cities. Nevertheless, many of these schemes have been criticised for their controversial nature as urban spectacles (Gotham, 2005), shaped by middle-class values (Zukin, 2006 [1995]; Evans, 2005, p. 8), and for their connection with forms of state-driven gentrification and revanchist urbanism (MacLeod, 2002; Atkinson, 2003; Kallin & Slater, 2014; Paton, 2018).

Event-led regeneration is consequently understood as an approach to urban regeneration where flagship events are the catalyst for transformation. These events are interpreted in this monograph as ‘large scale cultural (including commercial and sporting) events which have a dramatic character, mass popular appeal and international significance’ (Roche, 2000, p. 1). As discussed in Chapter 2, in contrast with some of the literature, the book adheres to Roche’s definition and considers large-scale cultural and sporting events as *mega events*. It also advocates an understanding of the ‘mega’ character of events in relative terms, rather than based solely on quantitative budgetary and visitor thresholds. The size of these events should be pondered by taking into account their magnitude against the demographic, geographical and socio-economic context of host cities. Along with recent scholarship (Di Vita & Wilson, 2020; Jones, 2020) and on the basis of the research behind the book, it is acknowledged that the largest of these schemes, such as the Olympic Games or the FIFA World Cup, are being disregarded by policy makers in many cities, while smaller-scale – albeit arguably large – events such as City/Capital of Culture (CoC) schemes are becoming increasingly popular among local policy makers in towns and cities across Europe.

The book engages in particular with four case studies: Hull, Rotterdam, Genoa and Valencia. These cases were selected through a scoping review of

event-led regeneration across port cities on the Mediterranean, the North Sea, the Baltic Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Shortlisting took into account factors such as demographics, role and characteristics of ports, socio-economic baseline issues (e.g. economic decline due to port restructuring), type of events held and approach to event programming, timeframe, with the aim of allowing diversity while seeking commensurability among instances. The role of cities in the European urban network (centrality) and the position of their ports within transnational maritime networks (intermediacy) were also considered, using Ducruet and Lee's (2006) matrix of port-city relations. The four case-study cities of the book appear in a more recent version of the aforementioned model (Ducruet, 2011; see Figure 1.1), where Hull is identified as urban port (low

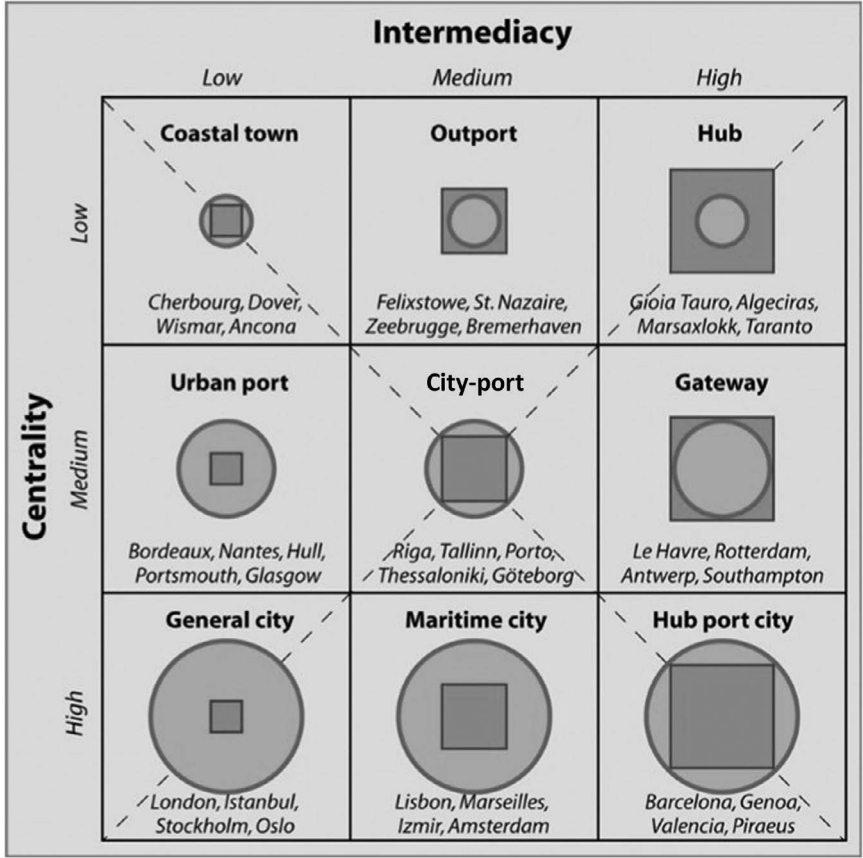


Figure 1.1 Matrix of port-city relationships.

Source: Ducruet (2011), published for the first time in Ducruet, C. (2011) The port city in multidisciplinary analysis, in Alemany, J., and Bruttomesso, R. (eds) *The port city in the XXIst century: New challenges in the relationship between port and city*. Venice: RETE, pp. 32–48.

Table 1.1 Case studies: key features.

<i>City</i>	<i>Port</i>	<i>Port specialisation</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Mega event(s)</i>
Hull	260,000 small city	Ferry, food, renewables, timber	Deindustrialisation, socio-economic decline, negative image (2010s)	UK City of Culture 2017
Genoa	500,000 6th largest city in the country	Container handling, cruise, ferry, food, petrochemicals, shipbuilding	Deindustrialisation, socio-economic decline (1980s)	• FIFA World Cup 1990 • Columbus Expo 1992 • G8 summit 2001 • European Capital of Culture 2004
Rotterdam	600,000 2nd largest city in the country	Chemicals, container handling, cruise, ferry.	Young low-skilled population, negative image (1990s)	• Euro 2000 Football Cup • European Capital of Culture 2001 • event policy 2001–2015
Valencia	800,000 3rd largest city in the country	Cruise, containers, ferry	Port-city separation (1990s)	• America's Cup 2007/2010 • F1 European Grand Prix 2008–2012

intermediacy and medium centrality), Rotterdam as gateway (high intermediacy and medium centrality) and Genoa and Valencia as hub port cities (high intermediacy and high centrality).

As shown by Ducruet and Lee's matrix, the selected case studies provide a broader perspective on port-city relationships by encompassing different profiles, yet they never sit at the extremes of the matrix, as would for example the pairs Gioia Tauro-London or Dover-Barcelona. Despite their context specificity, the selected cases do display similar characteristics and baseline issues, while at the same time provide diverse perspectives about the analysed processes (Table 1.1). They help explore the impact of mega events on port-city relationships on different timeframes and periods in relation to structural phenomena such as the 2008 financial and economic crisis.

The case-study analysis made use of primary and secondary data, and involved semi-structured interviews with policy makers (e.g. top officials from city councils and port authorities), city planners, event promoters, academics and other experts. It also involved a small number of street surveys with residents and visitors in redeveloped port areas and waterfronts, with the aim of gathering their views to identify aspects that were further discussed with the aforementioned informants, along with non-participant observations. Fieldwork in the four case-study cities was undertaken in 2018. A review of policy documents examined event bids and programmes (where available), relevant planning documents and local cultural strategies. The scale of analysis was limited to the transition space between urban port areas and the city centre or maritime urban districts. The focus is on central city locations. In order to demarcate the port-city interface, ports are considered – from a spatial perspective – as areas where maritime-related activities are prevalent. These spaces are also characterised by a certain restriction to access. The port-city interface is then understood as a set of 'waterfront zones in which the geography of the port and its city meet each other' (Daamen & Vries, 2013, p. 4), for example former docks, harbours, berths, port ring roads, but also urban areas that are or were shaped and influenced by maritime practices, but where urban uses are dominant.

Port cities, culture and regeneration: emerging themes

The study of the mutual influence between culture- and event-led regeneration processes and the socio-spatial, political and cultural-symbolic ties between ports and cities displays recurrent emerging themes across the case studies analysed. These themes, which are briefly presented later and discussed in detail in Chapters 4–7, include the acceptance or contestation of mega events and event-led regeneration, the spatiality of event-led regeneration within port-city relationships, the politics of these processes of transformation and their mutual connections with the cultural, symbolic and psychological ties among cities, ports and the sea.

Acceptance vs. contestation of mega events and event-led regeneration

Mega events have generated negative reactions and protests in many cities due to the considerable public spending associated with them, their debatable impacts in terms of economic development and employment, and their role in fostering gentrification, deprivation and the displacement of local populations (e.g. Cornelissen, 2012; Giulianotti et al., 2015). In port cities, these processes take place in specific socio-economic and spatial contexts, which may be characterised by a distinctive urban fabric, rich maritime heritage and cultures, multicultural populations and variegated social milieus. This 'exceptionalism' of port cities – in demographic, social and cultural terms (Lee, 1998; Belchem, 2000, 2006; Bianchini & Bloomfield, 2012; Hein et al., 2021) – and the myth of their independent and rebellious character (Van Hooydonk, 2007; Mah, 2014) raise questions as to how event-led regeneration is perceived. Event-led urban conflicts, or the acceptance of these events across local populations, must be examined in the light of the economic, yet also political and social, crisis that has been unfolding worldwide after the 2007–8 financial shock.

The geography of port-city relationships and event-led regeneration

Culture- and event-led urban regeneration add a further dimension to the study of spatial port-city relationships. Cultural activity is one among the many urban functions that populate the port-city interface. Waterfronts and the port-city interface may be understood as deterritorialised spaces, shaped by the interaction of processes operating at different scales (Desfor & Laidley, 2011). On the one hand, ports are shaped by broader, structural processes that extend well beyond the local scale, and therefore strategic decisions may be taken by global actors elsewhere in the world. Even where ports are managed by public actors, decisions may be taken by central governments, based hundreds of kilometres away. On the other hand, local values, meanings, stakes and forces interact with broader processes in the shaping of waterfront areas.

Land ownership regimes at the port-city interface

By definition, the port-city interface is a liminal space between these two entities. This means that the land in these parts of the city may be owned by different subjects, also depending on the nature of port authorities, which in turn may differ from a country to another. Many of the allegedly successful experiences of event-led regeneration involved the transformation of large areas of the city that were already owned by local councils. However, port areas may display rather different ownership regimes. This may result in the need for

more complex negotiations between the city and the port to host mega events and achieve regeneration, which may ultimately impact on the accessibility of regenerated waterfronts and port areas, as physical and immaterial borders are retained.

The cultural role of port authorities

As part of their policies to gain public support (Van Hooydonk, 2007) and guarantee their 'licence to operate', port authorities display a growing role in local cultural policies. Typically, they fund or directly deliver cultural activity and events with the aim of communicating their own role and the economic role of ports. In most cases, mega events in port cities directly involve port authorities, who operate in partnership with other local institutions and event promoters. This 'cultural' role of port authorities is explored as a component of political port-city relationships, as well as a factor contributing to shaping the city's cultural offer and imaginaries.

The imaginaries of the 'port city' and the 'city of culture'

Port competitiveness is the motor of economic prosperity and wealth in port cities. Understandably, local political discourses and planning concepts may praise the imaginary of the 'port city', as a maritime adaptation of the capitalist ideal of the industrious city that never sleeps. The last decades have nonetheless heralded the emergence of the urban imaginary of the 'city of culture' – or of the 'host city' in the case of large-scale sporting or commercial events – as a sign of renaissance and strategic repositioning in times of economic restructuring. Although the presence of an attractive city *per se* is increasingly acknowledged as a prerequisite for the competitiveness of ports, these two imaginaries may be overlapping or conflicting, particularly as a result of tense political relationships between port and city actors.

Authenticity, commodification and port city cultures

As any other process of urban transformation, event-led regeneration influences – and in turn is influenced by – the context in which it takes place and the array of local values and meanings. In the case of port cities, there is a mutual influence between processes of event-led regeneration and local maritime cultures, values and meanings, as well as the existing socio-cultural and symbolic ties between ports and cities. Considering the homogenising (Evans, 2003) and commodifying (Hall, 2006) tendency of these schemes and their replication across cities (Richards & Wilson, 2006, p. 1932), these initiatives generally raise concerns in relation to authenticity. In port cities, this homogenising tendency may contribute – as either an unintended outcome or a deliberate goal of urban policy – to the erosion of maritime cultures or their reframing around different conditions.

How to approach the book

The book is organised in eight chapters, including this introduction. Chapter 2 looks more in detail into port-city relationships, culture-led urban regeneration and mega events, examining the key literature and the current academic debate on these topics. Culture-led urban regeneration is linked with models of the evolution of port-city relationships in relation to structural phenomena of port migration and waterfront redevelopment.

Chapter 3 introduces the four case studies and makes use of the experience of these cities to reflect on the rationale for bidding to host mega events as catalyst for urban transformation and to diversify the local economy. Case studies are not presented and discussed individually. Rather, this volume adopts a comparative perspective and provides examples from the case studies, as well as from other cities, in relation to the key themes identified.

In Chapter 4, the role and nature of mega events in the post-crisis world is examined, together with the reactions to event-led regeneration. The chapter builds on the idea that we are living in times of great economic, political and social uncertainty and turmoil, in which the public's ontological security is undermined. The current socio-economic and political context, which differs strikingly from that of economic restructuring and growth in which the rhetoric of mega events and urban regeneration emerged, is shaping mega events and their legacy and is exacerbating opposition and contestation. Even where mega events do not generate immediate substantial opposition, the longer-term trajectory and the legacy of event-led regeneration processes may play a role in structural processes of gentrification and touristification – for example contributing to the growth of cruise tourism – which may be strongly opposed by residents, in particular in times of economic recession, rising unemployment and reckless dismantling of the welfare state and of basic societal and democratic values.

The spatiality of port-city relationships and event-led regeneration is examined in Chapter 5, by connecting urban regeneration on the waterfront with port development trajectories. The chapter problematises the assumption that event-led regeneration processes are enabled by the public ownership of port areas (e.g. as in the case of many continental European countries in comparison with the UK, where port areas are generally privately owned). It also shows that, although the transitory character of mega events means that they do not necessarily entail prolonged disruption of port activity, event-led regeneration may encourage a permanent presence and development of cultural activities in former port areas, which may generate port-city conflicts in the light of a renewed interest in these areas from port authorities and companies.

Chapter 6 explores the politics of event-led regeneration in port cities, looking at aspects such as the role of port authorities in cultural activity or the emerging imaginaries of 'port' and 'cultural' cities. Despite the fact that port authorities and companies may feel they have to engage with mega events, they

also engage with culture more broadly, either as a means to gain public support for their activity or as a sign of retightening relationships with urban actors. Narratives of ‘port’ and ‘cultural’ cities may generate clashing urban imaginaries, despite the greater economic relevance of port activities over cultural consumption. In some cases, these competing imaginaries may lead to port-city conflicts or to the willingness of policy makers to reframe, overlook or get rid of elements of the city’s maritime identity.

The socio-cultural and symbolic aspects of port-city relationships and event-led regeneration are explored in Chapter 7. These include, for example, processes of commodification or erosion of maritime cultures and the relationships between the framing of port city cultures within event-led regeneration and actually existing port-city links. The chapter makes use of the concepts of cultural demaritimisation and remaritimisation of port cities (Tommarchi, 2021) to show how event-led regeneration can operate to the detriment of local maritime identities or can be deployed to restore or create – whether or not authentic – port city cultures. The link between proximity to water and city branding is explored, to unpack the rhetoric behind the branding of port cities and examine whether port city culture is mobilised or overlooked in favour of an image based merely on water as a saleable element of urban design. The emergence of maritime cultural quarters, which differ from past experiences of waterfront redevelopment due to a stronger connection with local maritime heritage, is explored as an aspect of the legacy of mega events or of more mature cultural urban policies. The chapter also looks at mega events and their legacy considering the *actually existing* symbolic ties between ports and cities and the values and meanings attributed locally to the port and to port city culture. It shows how mega events and event-led regeneration may have unpredictable outcomes or may be in part ineffective or damaging depending on how they relate to these existing ties.

Finally, Chapter 8 outlines a heuristic model to approach trajectories of culture- and event-led regeneration in maritime port cities. It reflects upon the wider implications of the book, in relation to the study of port-city relationships, the changing meaning of waterfronts and waterfront redevelopment, the politics of local economic development and regeneration and place making. It provides recommendations for urban policy and planning in relation to mega events, concerning structural socio-economic challenges, the role of maritime identity and activity, the value of existing port-city symbolic and psychological links, the blending of urban and maritime functions and the legacy of mega events at the port-city interface. Finally, the chapter raises some wider issues for further research, such as global trends in mega events in times of global capitalism and austerity, the spatial focus of culture-led regeneration and port city studies, the future of waterfronts, socio-spatial inequalities in port cities of culture and events, sustainability (in its different dimension) and the potential impacts of the transition to a post-oil society.

Note

- 1 The book is the result of a doctoral research project on event-led regeneration and port-city relationships in Europe, undertaken by the author in 2016–2020 and funded by the University of Hull through a scholarship on ‘Culture-led regeneration’. The author also benefitted from his involvement in the evaluation of Hull UK City of Culture 2017, conducted by the Culture, Place and Policy Institute (CPPI) of the University of Hull and in the JPICF-funded project Heritage Opportunities/threats within Mega-Events in Europe (HOMEE), which was undertaken in 2018–2021 by an international team involving researchers from the Polytechnic of Milan (Italy), the University of Hull, the Neapolis University Pafos (Cyprus) and the International Cultural Centre (Poland).

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